

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

November 16, 2004

The Honorable Bill Young
Chairman
House Appropriations Committee
H-218, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable David Obey
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Committee
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member Obey:

As you work with your Senate counterparts to complete action on Fiscal Year 2005 appropriations legislation, we write to urge you to take action to help reduce the burden that the high cost of energy is taking on working families. Specifically, we request that you include \$600 million in emergency funding for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP).

LIHEAP includes both a basic state grant program and emergency funding. By designating an additional \$600 million in LIHEAP funding as "emergency" spending, the Congress can make clear that the current home heating outlook for this winter constitutes a true national emergency.

The need for emergency funding for LIHEAP grows more pressing each day. With heating oil prices above \$2 per gallon, it is estimated that it will cost about \$1,309 for a Northeastern family using home heating oil to heat their homes – about \$356 over last year's costs. This year's projected increase is of particular concern since last year's average LIHEAP grant totaled only \$313. Sadly, the news is no better for Midwestern consumers, who rely heavily upon natural gas and propane. According to the Department of Energy, the cost of propane heating will be \$1,443 (a 26% increase over last winter), and the cost of natural gas heating will be \$1003 (a 47% increase). Compared to the winters between 1998 and 2000, the prices of propane and natural gas have increased by 50% and 48%, respectively. **We believe that the rapid rise in home heating costs constitutes an emergency, and that the federal government must respond in kind.**

We are grateful to you for including \$2.011 billion in funding for LIHEAP in the House-passed Labor-HHS Appropriations bill. However, this amount is more than \$1 billion below the program's authorized level. Further, it is likely that without additional funding the states' low-income heating assistance programs will run out of money well before the end of the winter. Without this additional funding, a mere 13 percent of the more than 34.6 million applicants will receive LIHEAP assistance. For those lucky enough to participate in LIHEAP, the program is a lifesaver. According to a survey conducted last winter, LIHEAP helped restore heat to 62 percent of those who lost it last year because they could not pay their bills. Fifty four percent of recipients would have kept their homes at an unsafe temperature without LIHEAP, and 48 percent would have had their electricity or heat shut off.


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Finally, it has come to our attention that some activated National Guard and Reserve enlisted soldiers and their families, may be eligible for assistance but will not receive it because states do not have sufficient funds to meet anticipated requests. We believe that deserving families of men and women serving in harm's way should not have to face the prospect of a winter without adequate heating.

We appreciate the difficult task you face in compiling omnibus appropriations legislation, and we thank you for your attention to this vital request.

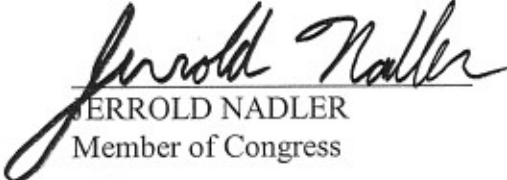
Sincerely,


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Member of Congress


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RON J. KIND
Member of Congress


MIKE MCINTYRE
Member of Congress


FERROL NADLER
Member of Congress

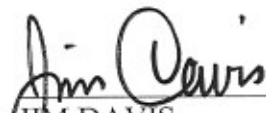

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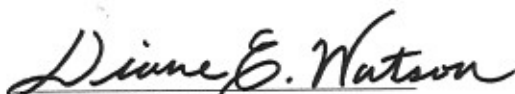
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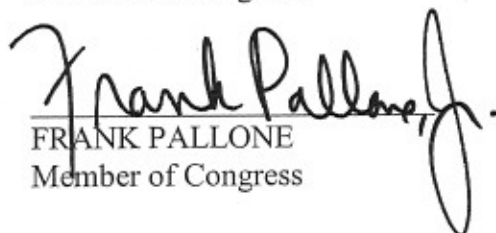
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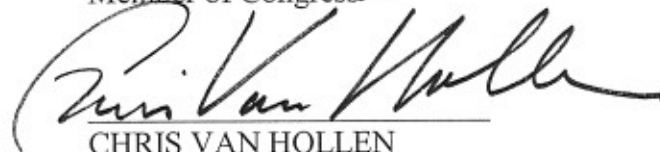
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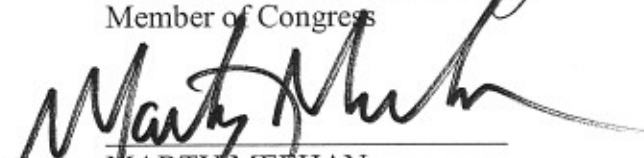
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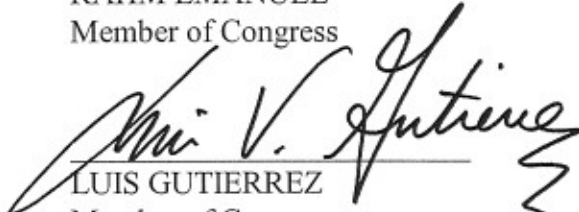

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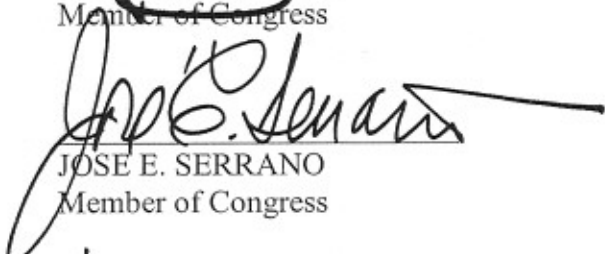

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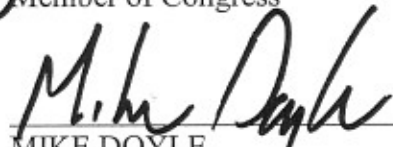
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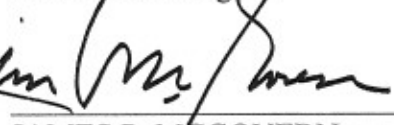
MIKE DOYLE

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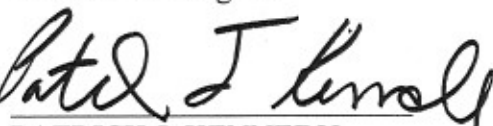
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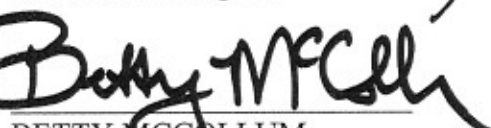
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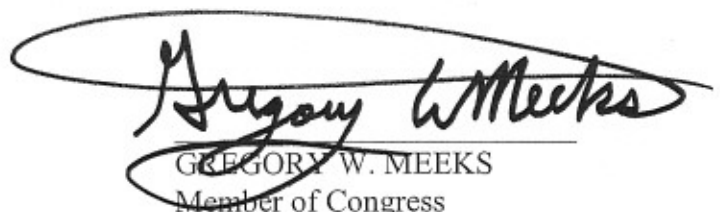
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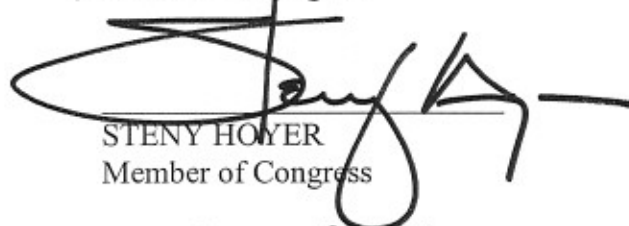
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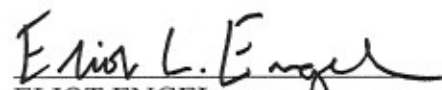
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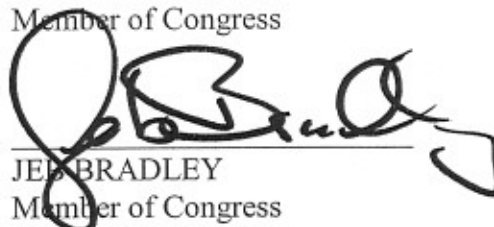

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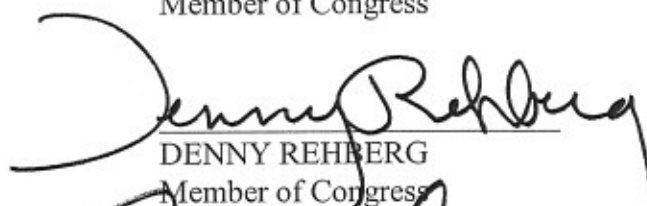

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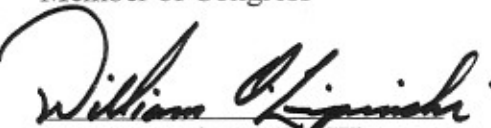

VITO FOSSELLA
Member of Congress

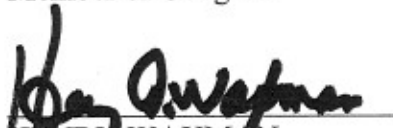

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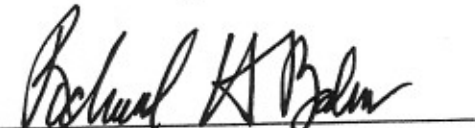

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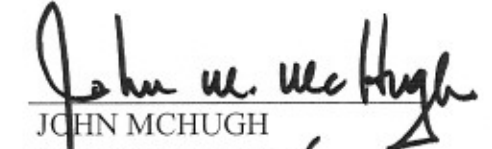

LANE EVANS
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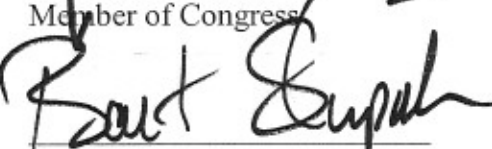

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Member of Congress

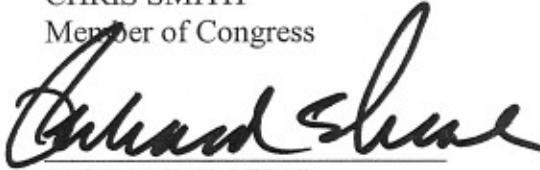





JOHN MCHUGH
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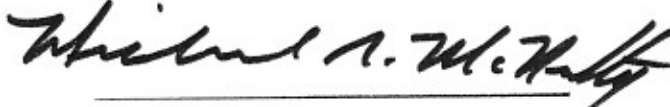

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RICHARD E. NEAL
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PETER DEFAZIO
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JOHN D. DINGELL
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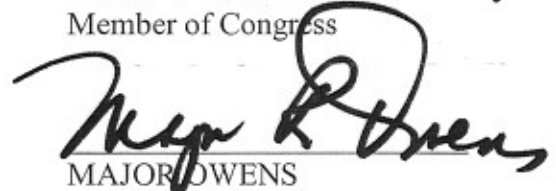
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LYNN WOOLSEY
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MAJOR OWENS
Member of Congress

